



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Southern Indiana Region Awarded Workforce Development Grant

NEW ALBANY (Sept. 8, 2005) – Southern Indiana has been awarded a grant from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development as part of a program aimed at creating new jobs and increasing personal income for Hoosiers. Southern Indiana was awarded \$144,418 as part of more than \$2.6 million in grants in the initial phase of the Innovating Indiana Strategic Skills Initiative. Introduced earlier this year, the \$23 million Strategic Skills Initiative program works with Indiana's 11 regions to identify key skills gaps in high-wage, high demand occupations.

Representatives from business, education, labor, economic and workforce development throughout the Southern Indiana region developed the plan under the leadership of the Southern Seven Workforce Investment Board. The Southern Indiana plan will build on the work the Workforce Investment Board has already begun of identifying and quantifying short-term and long-term skills shortages, and create and implement regional solutions. According to the grant proposal, the initial funding Southern Indiana has been awarded will help the region move forward with a fully integrated regional workforce strategy that leverages the strengths of the area's strongest industries and meets the needs of the future workforce needs to make Southern Indiana globally competitive.

"Historically, Indiana has struggled to effectively address skill shortages, and this has resulted in a loss of jobs and wages lower than the national average," said Indiana Workforce Development Commissioner Ron Stiver. "Governor Mitch Daniels has charged our agency with identifying innovative ways to help increase jobs and personal income for Hoosiers. This initiative enables us to anticipate skills and occupational shortages, identify their root causes, and implement realistic solutions for prevention of job loss, retention of regional talent and attraction of jobs paying competitive wages."

The announcement rewards Region 10, comprised of Washington, Scott, Crawford, Harrison, Floyd and Clark counties, with a grant worth \$144,418 for their work on the initial phase of the Innovating Indiana Strategic Skills Initiative.

"Helping to create high paying jobs for Hoosiers is our top priority," said Ron McKulick, Executive Director of Southern Seven Workforce Investment Board. "These funds will be utilized to ensure that our region be able to identify the workforce needs of our specific counties and will help establish long-lasting and high paying jobs for our citizens."

Regions will now begin Phase II and compete for the remaining \$20 million to create new jobs, reduce skill gaps, and increase Hoosier income. Regions will compete for these funds and be held accountable for achievements in their two-year action plans.



INDIANA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Additional information about the Innovating Indiana Strategic Skills Initiative, including an overview of the entire effort as well as applications, including region 10, can be viewed at <http://www.in.gov/dwd/employers/ssi.html>

For more information on the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, please visit our website at www.workforce.in.gov or call 1-888-WorkOne.



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